

Schoodic General Management Plan

Acadia National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Boston Support Office
Northeast Region



Planning Profile



Key Outcomes

The National Park Service is nearing the conclusion of a planning process that will result in a General Management Plan for the Schoodic district of Acadia. With strong public and visitor support, the former base will become the Schoodic Education and Research Center, part of a network of National Park Service Learning Centers, which promote research in national parks and provide educational opportunities to the public. This new use will complement the natural serenity of Schoodic and contribute to the protection of critical habitats that support a diversity of plants and wildlife.

Background

Added to Acadia National Park in 1929, the tranquil 2,366-acre Schoodic District is characteristic of maritime downeast Maine. Although only seven miles by water from Bar Harbor, a 45-mile drive over winding roads isolates Schoodic, which is less frequently visited than the more famous Mount Desert Island that most visitors identify with Acadia. Supporting low-density visitation, amenities include a 5.5-mile scenic loop on Schoodic Peninsula and panoramic views from Schoodic Point. Additionally at Schoodic Point, the United States Navy had operated the 100-acre Naval Security Group Activity, Winter Harbor base, successor to a U.S. Navy radio station that relocated to this site from Mount Desert Island in 1935.

After closing the base, the U.S. Navy transferred the land and 35 structures totaling 178,000 square feet to the National Park Service on July 1, 2002. Additional lands and facilities are being granted to nearby towns and to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; the National Park Service is consulting with them on the transition. The return of the land has triggered a reevaluation of Acadia's 1992 General Management Plan, which had not anticipated this change in use. The



National Park Service now has a unique opportunity to expand research and educational outreach at Acadia National Park, but with the challenge of accomplishing this post-to-park transformation at current budget and staffing levels.

Challenges

Leverage existing resources to significantly expand park outreach and public education – The General Management Plan Amendment defines a broad vision for the Schoodic District, and identifies expanded responsibilities and opportunities for the park and park partners. In keeping with this project's spirit of innovation and resource conservation, the National Park Service has already carried out a transportation feasibility study. Planners consulted with resource experts, visitors, park partners, park neighbors, elected officials, and governmental agencies to develop consensus support for the planning process and to pool resources in the best interests of the park and its constituents.

Accomplish a successful transition in a timely manner – The U.S. Navy was a good neighbor and member of the local community. After the Navy's departure, Acadia National Park and neighboring municipalities developed reciprocal partnerships to cover life safety, maintenance and public health responsibilities. Additionally, the National Park Service, recognizing the importance of immediate occupancy, has assigned a project director and planning team to develop reuse strategies. The park has already launched the Learning Center with a pilot education camp called the Schoodic Education Adventure.

Protect the resources and values of the Schoodic District – Landscape painters Thomas Cole, Frederic Church and Fitz Hugh Lane brought public attention to this part of the Maine coastline and influenced the early American conservation



Rockefeller Building Office and Reception (Former Navy Building 1)
Schoodic Education and Research Center

movement, which resulted in the creation of the first national parks, including Acadia. The National Park Service will continue to safeguard Schoodic's ecological communities including four Maine Critical Areas, maintain vistas, and perpetuate resource-based land uses. Also, the plan will ensure the preservation of the Schoodic District's cultural landscape, nominated as a district to the National Register of Historic Places, and the U.S. Navy's original 1935 apartment and operations building, which is listed on the National Register. New activities will have a lesser impact than the former base, which employed approximately 350 navy personnel in recent years.

The National Park Service at Acadia National Park protects and conserves outstanding scenic, natural, and cultural resources for present and future generations. These resources include a glaciated coastal and island landscape, biological diversity, clean air and water, and a rich cultural heritage. Acadia National Park also offers opportunities for high quality non-consumptive recreation and scientific research.



Education Building (former Navy Building 39)
Schoodic Education and Research Center

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Lessons Learned

Community and visitor outreach – During 2000 and 2001, over 1,200 respondents completed visitor surveys, which revealed that park visitors supported the National Park Service's intentions to maintain the natural qualities of Schoodic and launch an education and research center. Both formally and informally, the planners have reached out to park neighbors, partners, elected representatives, governmental agencies, and neighboring towns.

Enhancing resources – The goal of this planning process has been to accomplish a significant expansion of the visitor services available at Acadia National Park with minimal increases in federal funding and staff. Working together, the U.S. Navy and the National Park Service have effected a warm base transfer, allowing for a complete transfer of continuously maintained buildings and the full complement of existing fixtures and furnishings.

Cultivating partners – By way of careful planning, coordinating with existing partners, working with the community, and incubating a new non-profit, a consensus-based plan with broad public support is nearly complete and ready to implement. A 100-acre developed site that could have become an operational burden will become a public asset in accordance with the National Park Service mission.